(b) making available other facilities such as water, power, road, etc.

Sd/-
(B. K. BAL)
JOINT SECRETARY TO THE GOVT. OF INDIA

ORDERED that a copy of the resolution be communicated to all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, Planning Commission, Chief Secretaries of the State Governments and UT Administrations, Chairmen and Managing Directors of the Food Corporation of India and the Central Warehousing Corporation.

ORDERED also that the resolution be published in the Gazette of India for general information.

Sd/-
(B. K. BAL)
JOINT SECRETARY TO THE GOVT. OF INDIA

To,
The Manager,
Government Printing Press,
Faridabad.

SAARC Vision for the year 2000

*77. SHRI V. P. DURAISAMY:
SHRI C. P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the SAARC Vision for the year 2000;

(b) whether it is a fact that SAARC Organisation is not proactive and lying dormant; and

(c) what steps Government would take to activate the SAARC Organisation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) The "SAARC Vision Beyond the Year 2000" is the title of the Report of the SAARC Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) established by the Ninth SAARC Summit to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of SAARC and identify measures to further enhance the effectiveness of the Association. The leaders also decided that the Group should develop a long-range vision and formulate a perspective plan of action including a SAARC Agenda for 2000 and Beyond.

The GEP's recommendations focused on 3 areas:

I. A time bound plan for regional economic integration, including negotiation of a Treaty for a **South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA)** by 1999, with implementation commencing in 2000 and achievement of a full SAFTA in 2008 for SAARC members and 2010 for SAARC LDCs;

II. Adoption of a Social Charter for SAARC incorporating social welfare targets in the areas of population stabilisation, universal primary education, empowerment of women, poverty eradicaiton, human resource development, and health promotion, nutrition and protection of children;

III. Reform of SAARC institutions.

In the Economic field, it also envisaged a SAARC Customs Union, with harmonisation of external tariffs by 2015, and a SAARC Economic Union, with harmonisation of monetary and fiscal policies by 2020. The GEP recommended special measures for the Least Developed Countries to enable them to adjust to a Free Trade Area.

Action taken on the GEP Report was as follows:

SSARC leaers at the 10th SAARC Submit at Colombo held in July 1998 accepted two of the GEP's main recommendations—(i) achieving SAFTA and (ii) the adoption of a SAARC Social Charter. The leaders agreed to set up a Committee of Experts with specific terms of reference for drafting a comprehensive treaty regime for

creating a free trade area by 2001.

The other recommendations in the GEP Report were considered by the SAARC Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries and Council of Ministers in Nuwara Eliya in March 1999. There was however no consensus on the long term goals of a SAARC Customs Union by 2015 and SAARC Economic Union by 2020. It was agreed that these issues would be further discussed.

The First Meeting of the Committee of Experts on SAFTA was held on July 15—17, 1999, in Kathmandu at which its Terms of Reference were agreed upon. The second meeting is scheduled to be helf in Kathmandu on mutually agreed dated. India has conveyed its agreement to participation in the meeting. An Intergovernmental Expert Group is also proposed to be set up to commence work on the Social Charter.

Following the military coup in Pakistan a decision was taken after mutual consultations among SAARC member States to postpone the 11th SAARC Summit scheduled to be held on November, 26—28, 1999 in Kathmandu, Nepal. It may be recalled that Pakistan was also suspended from the Commonwealth's decision-making Councils and this suspension continues.

However, postponement of the Summit does nto impinge on technical and functional cooperation, and SAARC meetings continue to be held at the technical and official levels. Thus the following meetings, which India has participated in, have taken place:

1. "Financing Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development and Alleviation of Rural Energy Povery in South Asia", June 12—14, 2000 Colombo. This meeting was organised under the joint aegis of the World Energy Council and SAARC.

2. 6th Meeting of the Governing Board of the South Asian Development Fund (SADF), May 22-23, 2000 Maldives.

3. First meeting of the Technical Committee on Agriculture and rural Development under the restructured Integrated Programme of Action, July 4-5, 2000, Kathmandu.

Meetings of the rest of the SAARC Technical Committee (TCs) under the restructured Integrated Programme of Action are being scheduled.

Obligations for Government servants

*78. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the Fifth Central Pay Commission's report there was also a package under which certain obligations were required to be undergone by the Government servants in order to get the benefit of the revised Pay scale;

(b) whether it is a fact that one of the important obligation was that no extension shall be granted to government servants after the age of superannuation;

(c) in how many cases Government have granted extension in different departments after the acceptance of the report; and

(d) what are the other salient features of the package and what steps Government are contemplating to implement it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING AND DEPARTMENT OF PENSIONS AND PENSIONERS' WELFARE OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No Sir. However, the Fifth Central Pay Commission in its report had observed that the Government will appreciate the nexus that the Commission seek to establish between the utility of the public servant to the nation and the payment he receives for his work and its report should be implemented as an integral whole, in its entirety, as complete package.

(b) The Pay Commission recommended for increasing the age of retirement of Central Government employees to sixty years after taking into consideration variety of factors which include total ban on extension in service except for some special categories: The